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ABSTRACT

This paper contends that leadership at the state level can best improve schools through a leadership style that leads by example, by force of ideas, and by a devotion to fairness and justice. Responsibilities of state leaders include (1) reading and understanding the effective schools literature; (2) introducing school administrators to the potentials of educational technology; (3) promoting training programs that concentrate on human motivation, history, law, philosophy, organizational development, and human relations; (4) redefining the idea of leadership from one of position power to one of persuasion and fairness; and (5) finding ways to identify and reward effective schools and give recognition to competent school personnel. Ten leadership competencies are listed at the conclusion, and references are included. (TE)

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LEADERSHIP:
A MATTER OF MADNESS OR GOODNESS

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LEADERSHIP:
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M. Donald Thomas

"The effective principal (or leader) leads by example, by force of ideas, by devotion to fairness and justice."

- Fred M. Hechinger

"A leader is one who, out of madness or goodness, volunteers to take on the woe of a people. There are few so foolish; hence the erratic quality of leadership in the world."

- John Updike

Leadership at the state level can be one of madness or it can be a contribution to improving our schools. It can be a frantic effort to fix everything or it can be a concentration on a few important items. It can be the futile exercise of power or it can empower people to help themselves.

More than anything else, we need, at the state level, leadership which appreciates and understands the underlying dynamics of human aspirations - the ability to build character. It is a leadership style which increases productivity of others and establishes a personal commitment to quality.

If the effective schools literature has taught us anything, it has certainly taught us that productivity and quality are both possible - even under extremely difficult circumstances. And since both are possible, they ought to be the principle objective of state leadership.

Educational leaders of the 1980's and the 1990's will need to wrestle with productivity and quality in the same way that CEO's have wrestled with them in the private sector. State leaders, particularly, must come to understand that improving schools will require the ability to increase productivity and establish quality. That can best be done in a leadership style which understands human motivation and builds on the talents and contributions of many. It is a leadership style which leads by example, by force of ideas, and by a devotion to fairness and justice.

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If my premise is somewhat accurate, what can state leaders do to promote effective schools and at the same time improve productivity and establish quality? What leadership responsibilities should state leaders concentrate on? Let me suggest what I believe are those responsibilities and how they relate to effective schools.

1. State leaders must read the effective schools literature, understand the research related to it, and promote strategies which support the effective schools correlates.
2. State leaders must introduce school administrators to the potentials of technology as a method for increasing educational productivity and for improving the quality of teaching and learning.
3. State leaders must promote training progams which concentrate on human motivation, history, law, philosophy, organizational development, and human relations.
4. State leaders must redefine leadership from one of position power to one of persuasion and fairness.
5. State leaders must find ways to identify and reward effective schools and give recognition to extremely competent school personnel.

Effective Schools

A study of the corporate world indicates that successful companies have an ethos - an over-riding purpose which is articulated and supported by leaders and followers alike. It is sometimes mysterious. It is sometimes wrapped in symbolism. It is often accompanied by ritual and unique practices. It is, however, an understood common purpose, an ideal to which the organization is dedicated. It is the faith, the heart, the poetry, the soul of the organization. It is what sets it apart from less effective organizations.

I believe that the effective schools and the effective schools correlates must become the ethos of education. It is the litany that can bind us together in a common purpose. It is the methodology that can give us confidence. It is the basis for improving productivity and providing better education for all students.

It is now abundantly clear that we can have good schools by design and not by chance. The effective schools research brings together into one concept what educational leaders should stand for:

- All children can learn and it is our obligation to create schools where they will learn.
- Children cannot have equal opportunity unless and until schools are established which provide safety, order, purpose, and standards for all.
- Instruction is the main responsibility of the school and it is the chief priority of teachers, principals, custodians, secretaries, and students.
- We have an obligation to know what children are and are not learning and must asess periodically their learning progress.
- Educational leaders at all levels must insist on effective instruction and create conditions to make it possible.

The effective schools research gives us the basis for creating equal educational opportunity and makes it possible for us to attain success and satisfaction. It is, as I have already said, the faith of the profession, the ethos of education, the over-riding purpose to which educational leaders should be committed.

Technology and Productivity

State leaders should do whatever they can to explore the use of technology to improve productivity. While I am not at all sure that technology and education can be brought successfully together to unite in marriage, I am certain that teaching and learning must become based on more productive strategies. Within the world of computer chips, video discs, satellite reception, electric chalkboards, and wireless telephones there must be a way to make teaching and learning more effective.

We have had some bad experiences with technology in education - language laboratories, television instruction, computer games, and so on. Yet the reality is that

we have few choices for making schools more productive - technology is one of those few choices. Further, technology was not looked upon as a major force to improve productivity in former years, and it is a force related to productivity today - not only in education - but in every segment of our national economic life.

What may be our best hope in the use of technology as a positive force is the state of the act. Technological development is so far advanced from what it was 10 years ago that it is almost frightening. Technology now has the capability to really individualize instruction, assist teachers with record keeping, monitor attendance, assemble volumes of data, and control a sophisticated system of teaching and learning to reduce cost and maintain quality. It is more a matter of economics than a matter of possibility. Technology is a natural ally of the effective schools research. It enhances the correlates:

1. To monitor learning.
2. To individualize instruction.
3. To create a positive climate.
4. To focus on instruction.
5. To establish high expectations.

The Human Condition

Productivity, quality, motivation, achievement, satisfaction, recognition - all are part of the human condition in the work arena. State leaders should appreciate that character is more important than regulation, that self-discipline is more important than control, that Herzberg makes more sense than time and motion studies.

Training programs should be established that concentrate on the human dimensions of teaching and learning. Schools must become satisfying places for both students and teachers. They must become inviting places to teach, to learn, to achieve, and to obtain recognition. Thus, administrators should study human growth and development, philosophy ethics, law, history, organizational development, and human relations.

It appears to me that if teaching is to become an attractive profession, there is more to be done than increase salaries. We must create working conditions which are enjoyed in other professions - participation in decision-making, freedom of time, collegiality, incentives for achievement, recognition, status, and public esteem. Leadership needs to articulate these conditions and strive to implement them in every school, especially through administrative training programs.

Training programs should emphasize the need to improve the "quality of life" in school for both students and educators. How can we reduce boredom, the sameness of work day after day, the confinement of classrooms? These are the important questions around which administrator training programs should be developed.

Here again, the effective schools literature is extremely helpful. People are motivated by expectations, respond to positive environment, achieve satisfaction when challenged, initiate activities when required, and create inventions when free to do so. Effective schools are both productive and satisfying. They support high achievement and high personal satisfaction - quality and productivity for both students and teachers.

State leaders need to recognize the human condition and its congruence to effective schools. They need to be the exemplars of what we wish all leadership to be - men and women who understand what Herzberg calls the "humanism" of leadership - the ingredient which separates man from mammal.

Persuasion Leadership

Educational leadership in the future will be what Herman Kahn called "the quantum leap into a society based on people and not things." Rather than from positions leadership will emanate from knowledge, wisdom, ability to convince and persuade, and a personal commitment to fairness and justice. We must not only lead, but lead ethically through persuasion and the force of ideas.

State leaders must rely more on the study of effective schools and less on administrative style, more on the nature of the followers and less on the characteristics

of leaders. It is a leadership that builds trust in public education because it is productive, it is open, and it is sensitive to human needs.

Further leadership in education is more a commitment to a cause than the development of leadership skills. It is as John Updike wrote - "a desire to take on the woe of a people." Or as Horace Mann put it - "one should be ashamed to die until he has won some victories for mankind." Leadership in public education is a devotion to teaching and learning, to finding a way for all to learn. It is an appreciation for public service.

In this sense leadership is more difficult. It is more complex. It is transitory. It is, however, what is needed to improve our schools and to establish quality.

Rewards for Quality

Now that we have the ability to establish effective schools, state leaders should establish programs to recognize productive schools and extremely competent people. South Carolina may be at the forefront of this movement. In its Education Improvement Act of 1984, the state has enacted into law:

- Incentive pay programs for teachers.
- Incentive pay programs for principals.
- Awards programs for effective schools.
- Grants to teachers for innovative projects.
- An education foundation to support effective practices.
- Private sector partnerships to recognize those who make contributions to improving schools.

All of these programs have a common aim - to reward productivity and competence - the basis for improved quality.

Merit pay in education is beginning to be acceptable. It can contribute to greater effort and may attract more able people into the profession. At least it is worth a try.

In addition to pay, we must find ways of providing other incentives for quality recognition, awards, status, and public esteem. These may be more important than money.

The beginning of a new era in education is an appropriate time for all of us to re-examine the future of public education. It is also an appropriate time to take a new look at leadership. It is an opportunity for us to think, to plan, to imagine, and to create. Such an examination will help us to establish appropriate educational priorities.

For me, such priorities include a concentration on quality and productivity. It is my hope that state leaders, particularly, will recognize the importance of helping schools to become more productive and of creating conditions which establish a commitment to excellence.

Leadership at the state level can contribute to madness or to goodness. The same is true at the district or school level. Understanding the effective schools literature, understanding the dynamics of human motivation, and knowing how to set priorities will assist each of us to establish more goodness than madness. In that process we take on the woe of a people and educate the children and young people of our nation better than they have ever been educated in the past. If that is accomplished, leadership will have been exercised. Thank you.

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

1. Ability to listen effectively - understand both content and feeling.
2. Ability to validate the accuracy of information received.
3. Ability to speak frankly and clearly and to speak directly to the issue.
4. Ability to be positive about life, about self, and about one's work.
5. Ability to understand and to articulate learning processes.
6. Ability to keep current, to synthesize knowledge, and to utilize research.
7. Ability to receive satisfaction and reinforcement from one's work.
8. Ability to motivate self and to inspire colleagues.
9. Ability to try new ideas, take risks, and encourage others to do so.
10. Ability to articulate purpose, to establish a vision, to inspire confidence in schools.

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